









Dr Faustus: (a) The role of comedy

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 refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To examine the role of the 'low' comedy in the play.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Make a list of as many different types of comedy as you can.
 - The class could give a modern example of each kind
 - (This website gives a useful checklist: www.buzzle.com/articles/types-of-comedy.html)
 - Which types are most popular in the group?
 - Do any seem old-fashioned?
 - What stock characters or situations are there?
 - ( Characterisation in *Dr Faustus* > Comic characters Robin, Rafe and Vintner > Stock characters and the Elizabethan theatre)
 - Students could be referred to the Commedia dell'arte tradition.
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Look through the comic scenes (scenes 2, 4, 6, 8, 9B):
 - Find examples of the types of comedy listed in the **Opening Exercise**
 - Draw up three columns (either on paper, individually, or together on the board)
 - One column briefly describes the comic event or comment
 - The second gives scene and line references
 - The third lists the type of comedy used
 - ( *Doctor Faustus* - Synopsis and commentary > appropriate scenes)
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Distribute the examples found in scenes 2, 4, 6, 8, 9B around the group:
 - Students discuss the possible purpose of each use of comedy
 - They could choose from this list (some examples may cover more than one of these suggestions, and students might find other possible reasons):
 - Comic relief
 - To show time passing
 - To echo key themes (which ones?)
 - ( See The themes of *Doctor Faustus*)
 - To parallel Faustus himself
 - To add to the criticism of the Roman Catholic church.
 - What would the play lose without these scenes (which some critics have claimed were not written by Marlowe)?
 - ( Structure of *Doctor Faustus* > Structure by act and scene > structural contrasts)
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Choose one of the comic scenes (perhaps these could be shared around the class, or all do the same one and compare approaches)
 - Create a set of director's notes which show how the comedy could be brought out. This could include:
 - A storyboard
 - Suggestions about which famous actors could play the roles
 - Students could consider relocating the play to a different time or place in order to help bring out the humour
 - Would this work in the serious parts of the play, too?
 - ( The context of *Doctor Faustus* > The theatrical context)
- ❖ **Critical task:** Many critics have found the play to be uneven in quality. Do you consider that removing the comic scenes would improve the overall quality of the text?
 - ( Critical approaches to *Doctor Faustus* > The contemporary critical reception of *Doctor Faustus*)
 - ( *Doctor Faustus*: Approaching essays and exams > Sample questions on *Doctor Faustus* no.8.)
- ❖ **Extension task:** Look at a Shakespeare play that you know well
 - How does Shakespeare use comedy in this text?
 - Does he employ any of Marlowe's comic devices and / or intentions?
 - Where do you consider Shakespeare is more, or less, successful?